

**For U.S. forces
serving abroad**

Stripes™



A news digest from The Stars and Stripes

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Eight pages

Missing guardsman spurs dispute

By Los Angeles Times

In January 1997, a company of 125 California National Guard soldiers went to Germany as part of the United States' peacekeeping effort in Bosnia.

In September, 124 returned. Spec. Mason Jacques Karl O'Neal of Sunnyvale, Calif., was not among them.

His strange disappearance has triggered a dispute between the Army and the National Guard.

Caught in the middle of this bureaucratic breach are O'Neal's bewildered wife and children, who are now plagued with deep financial troubles to go along with their mental anguish. Explanations for O'Neal's disappearance in Germany range from "missing under unusual circumstances" to emotional problems to outright desertion.

Because the Army has branded O'Neal a deserter, it has stripped his wife, Fatima O'Neal, of his pay and benefits, forcing

her and their three young children — ages 5, 2 and 18 months — to go on welfare.

"It doesn't make any sense for the American Army to lose one soldier. ... There was no war. Where is my husband?" Fatima O'Neal said.

For almost a year, the two services have quarreled about who was responsible for the missing man and who should investigate the case. Neither the Army nor the National Guard, which does not believe O'Neal is a deserter, has made any attempt since last fall to uncover his fate.

As recently as last week, National Guard officials have pressed the Army to review O'Neal's case.

"I wanted to be sure that somebody spoke up for the soldier and his family," said Lt. Col. Warren Alberts from the National Guard. "I'll admit that we (the National Guard) made a mistake in this soldier's case. We failed his family and need

to correct it."

National Guard officials believe O'Neal is a "medical casualty" disabled by psychological problems, not a deserter, and should be listed as missing. Although his family rejects any finding of mental illness, such a ruling would allow them to continue receiving his pay and benefits.

"He was not (mentally) competent at the time and without the mental capacity to commit the crime (of desertion)," said Alberts, appointed by the Guard in January to lobby the Army to declare O'Neal missing.

O'Neal, 32, was sent to Germany as a military policeman with the 649th Military Police Company.

According to the report, O'Neal's psychological problems began to surface only days before he escaped on July 17 from two medical escorts taking him to a base clinic for observation.

First jets to get device upgrade in May

By Stars and Stripes

The first U.S. Air Forces in Europe aircraft scheduled to receive an anti-collision device will roll in for its upgrade in May, a USAFE spokesman said Tuesday.

Officials think the equipment might have prevented a midair crash off the coast of Africa that killed 33 people last September.

Air Force Capt. Lindsey Borg said a C-20 jet would be the first of 50 aircraft in the USAFE inventory to receive the device. The device, called a Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System, has two components. One part is a cockpit instrument that depicts for a pilot the airspace around him. The second piece is the sensing device that sup-

ports the system.

There was no such instrument aboard either of the planes that collided Sept. 13 off the coast of Namibia in the South Atlantic. The collision of the C-141 StarLifter, which was carrying nine Americans, and a German Tupolev 154, led to the deaths of all 33 people aboard the two planes.

Borg said the Air Force had

planned to install the system in many of its transport planes, but he said the crash has accelerated the process.

"The goal is to have each of the aircraft modified by the year 2000," Borg said, "but it's funding dependent."

The funds to pay for the upgrade are coming from Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

House narrowly approves military funding

By New York Times

WASHINGTON — The House on Tuesday narrowly approved \$2.9 billion for emergency military spending and aid to disaster victims, but the White House said President Clinton would veto the bill because money to pay for it would come from cutting some of the administration's prized domestic programs.

The vote was 212-208 — surprisingly

close given lawmakers' usual support for troops in the field and constituents hurt by natural disasters. Seventeen Republicans — moderates opposed to the domestic cuts and conservatives against U.S. military involvement in Bosnia — voted with 190 Democrats and one independent against the legislation. Seven Democrats joined 205 Republicans in support of the bill.

The slim margin undercuts House Republicans' bargaining leverage going into what is expected to be a contentious conference committee with the Senate late next month when lawmakers return from their spring recess. "No one can dispute the fact this is a difficult bill, start to finish," Rep. Robert Livingston, R-La., who heads the House Appropriations Committee, told reporters after the vote.

Both sides in abuse case at VMI facing charges

By Washington Post

Three freshmen at the Virginia Military Institute who said they were struck with a belt for "infractions" such as playing country music or getting a low grade are facing the same punishment as the three seniors who allegedly hit them — expulsion from the school because they initially denied that the incidents took place.

All six students have been charged with violating VMI's honor code, which prohibits lying, and will be tried next week by the student Honor Court. Any student who breaks the honor code is automatically expelled.

Lawyers for the three freshmen say that the cadets were pressured by two of the seniors — who were also their mentors — to cover up the episodes and that it is absurd that the victims of the strikings face the same charge as the alleged perpetrators.

The freshmen and seniors also filed a joint motion with the Honor Court alleging that student investigators dragged them out of bed for questioning on several nights and did not advise them of their

right to remain silent.

"Dragging people out of their beds to interrogate them is not only draconian, it's un-American," said Bernhardt Wruble, a Washington lawyer who is one of the attorneys representing the three freshmen.

Wruble said that if the students are expelled, they will challenge the constitutionality of VMI's disciplinary system by filing a lawsuit in federal court.

VMI Superintendent Josiah Bunting III, who will review the Honor Court's decision and has the authority to overturn it, issued a statement Tuesday defending the school's disciplinary practices while declining to comment on the specifics of the case.

"Our system is stern but fair, demanding but also solicitous of its obligations to cadets," Bunting said. "I have great faith in it. It is our policy not to report aspects of any investigation."

The case marks the second time this year that VMI freshmen have alleged they were struck with a belt by seniors who were serving as their mentors.

Inspectors find no clues in Iraq palace

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — U.N. arms experts have found no clues about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction so far in President Saddam Hussein's palace compounds — hardly a surprise, the head of the team said Tuesday.

Charles Duelfer told The Associated Press that the inspections were not expected to yield much since the Iraqis knew about them in advance. And, he said, the first visit was intended mainly as a preliminary survey.

"We have no intention or expectation of finding prohibited materials," said Duelfer, the deputy chairman of the U.N. Special Commission overseeing inspections.

Duelfer, an American, said the 71 U.N. weapons experts and the 20 diplomats accompanying them will complete their visits to eight of Saddam's palaces by the end of the week.

Saudis still probing bombing, State Department says

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saudi Arabia is still investigating details of the unsolved June 1996 bombing that killed 19 American airmen, the State Department said Tuesday.

"We are continuing to have exchanges with the Saudi government and have had

repeated and very high-level assurances of cooperation from them," spokesman James P. Rubin said.

Reports from Riyadh quoted the kingdom's interior minister Monday as saying the Saudis had completed their investigation of the bombing of the Khobar Towers

apartment complex in eastern Saudi Arabia.

United States officials have repeatedly complained that the Saudi Arabians have refused to share information and were dragging their feet in the terrorism investigation.

Navy plane crew rescued after crash

By Los Angeles Times

SAN DIEGO — All four crew members of a Navy anti-submarine airplane were rescued Tuesday morning after the craft crashed into the Pacific during a training flight, officials said.

The crew members, who ejected from their plane, were flown to Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego and admitted with minor injuries, said a Navy spokesman. They were pulled from the sea by four Navy swimmers and a pair of search-and-rescue helicopters.

The twin-engine S-3B Viking, used for hunting subs and surface ships, went

down about 8:30 a.m., about 30 miles from where marine specialists were releasing J.J., the California gray whale that washed ashore last year. Navy officials said the flight was unrelated to J.J.'s return to the ocean.

"They didn't have anything to do with each other. They just happened to be in the same area," said Senior Chief James Jackson, a Navy spokesman.

The crash site was about 20 miles from San Clemente Island, in a key training area for Navy aircraft and ships.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

Stripes

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Vets want compensation for tobacco-related claims

By Scripps Howard

WASHINGTON — For nearly 100 years after the Civil War, the U.S. Army was required by law to give every enlisted soldier 16 ounces of tobacco a month. Free cigarettes long were included in field rations. Medics in Vietnam battlefields, as had their predecessors in earlier wars, used cigarettes to calm wounded soldiers' nerves and stave off shock.

And cigarettes and other tobacco products are still sold at substantially lower prices in military base exchanges and commissaries than they can be bought at civilian stores.

For veterans' organizations, those facts clearly illustrate the ways the U.S. government long has encouraged and even subsidized smoking in the ranks.

Now, just as the government is demanding that tobacco companies pony up to help pay the health costs stemming from their decades-long promotion of smoking, veterans' advocates are saying Congress and the Clinton administration must do no

less than the same for veterans suffering smoke-related illnesses.

But on Tuesday, Department of Veteran's Affairs officials told a Senate committee that smoking was a purely voluntary choice made by individual soldiers. To compensate those who decided to smoke and now are sick would not only break the already strained veterans' benefits bank, but would also overwhelm the bureaucracy and cause untenable delays in processing other veterans claims, they said.

The Clinton administration calculates that such compensation for tobacco-related claims would cost \$17 billion over five years. The Congressional Budget Office figures the price tag would be \$10 billion. Neither the VA nor Congress has budgeted any money for such claims for the fiscal year 1999 budget, and both want to prohibit any smoking-related benefits in the future.

The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans group, calls that an outrage.

Touch therapy debunked by girl's project

By Scripps Howard

A fourth-grade science fair project published in one of the nation's leading medical journals is calling into question the value of therapeutic touch treatments given by more than 50,000 practitioners across the country.

Emily Rosa and her mom, Linda Rosa, a registered nurse and longtime skeptic of therapeutic touch, went to the offices of 21 practitioners in different sets of field trials during 1996 and last year to determine whether they could perceive a "human energy field" from the girl's hands in a blind experiment.

Sitting at a table behind a cardboard-and-towel screen, touch therapists who all said they routinely felt the energy fields of their patients put their arms through a hole and declared whether Emily was holding her hand over their right or left hand. They identified the correct hand 123 out of 280 tries (44 percent), a slightly worse score than random guessing should have produced. "Failure to substantiate touch therapy's most fundamental claim is unrefuted evidence that the claims of touch therapy are groundless and that further professional use is unjustified," the researchers conclude in their report printed today in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Emily, now 11 and a sixth-grader in Loveland, Colo., says she was a little disappointed that she only earned a "participatory" blue ribbon for her project along with everyone else in the science fair. But she may get a consolation prize: her mother says she's talking to Guinness Book of World Records officials about a new entry for the youngest person to publish an article in a peer-reviewed journal.

Tobacco bill's prospects rising

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cigarette stocks plunged Tuesday as prospects for Congress' leading tobacco bill rose over industry opposition. A formerly skeptical Republican leader predicted committee approval within days.

"My guess is that it will pass the Commerce Committee this week," bringing it a step closer to a

Senate vote before June 1, said Assistant Majority Leader Don Nickles of Oklahoma. "We'll need to make big decisions quickly to determine where it's going to go."

Tobacco stock prices fell a day after Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who chairs the Senate Commerce Committee, announced terms of his bipartisan bill, which is

tougher than the \$368 billion June agreement between cigarette makers and 40 states that sued them.

The bill, which would cost companies \$506 billion over 25 years and provide no protection from class-action lawsuits, has the support of the overwhelming majority of his 20-member committee, McCain said.

Wealthy protest they don't pay enough taxes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Talk about putting your money where your mouth is.

A group of wealthy people announced Tuesday they were so offended by the lack of fairness in last year's tax law that they will donate proceeds from their capital gains tax cut to charity or to the federal government.

"As beneficiaries of numerous policies that are tilted in our favor, we felt a responsibility to take action to create a more fair system," said Mike Lapham, project director for a group called Responsible Wealth.

Lapham said 80 wealthy people who will benefit from the 1997 tax law agreed

to pledge at least \$628,000 to various causes.

Those causes include a campaign to push for more evenhanded tax policies.

Charles Demere, a semiretired Episcopal priest and investor, said he will give \$5,000 he saved from the 1997 tax act to the Fund for Tax Fairness.

Cochran holds court at schools

By Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Johnnie Cochran can talk at length about his illustrious legal career and about his crusade for social change. He can leave an audience inspired and captivated by his words, his stories and his successes.

But open the discussion to a group of inquisitive teenagers from Heidelberg High School, and you hear questions like these:

"Do you really believe O.J.

Simpson is innocent?" one student screamed Monday from his seat in the school's packed auditorium. "If he didn't kill his wife, do you think he paid someone to do it?"

Another student asked, "What do you think of the American system of justice when O.J. is deemed not guilty in criminal court and guilty in a civil court?"

Cochran responded with ease.

"To this day, I believe he's

innocent," he said. "I knew the facts, and the 12 jurors who sat there for a year of their lives, earning 5 dollars a day, knew the facts, too."

It's been roughly 2 years since Cochran, serving as captain of a legal "Dream Team," delivered the emotional closing arguments at what was dubbed The Trial of the Century. And while Cochran realizes he's most known for this high-profile case, he is quick to note the plethora of suc-

cesses before and after he defended Simpson.

One of the best-connected lawyers in Los Angeles, Cochran's client list includes such figures as Michael Jackson and rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg. He represents victims of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the 1996 ValuJet and TWA air disasters.

"I don't let people define me," said Cochran, who began his career in 1963 as a deputy city attorney.

88-year-old woman charged in murder of jobless man

By New York Times

FRANKLIN, Va. — Almost everybody here knows Virginia Davis.

Among the paper mill workers, peanut farmers and small-business owners who make this a prosperous and pleasant town of 8,500 in southeast Virginia, she cuts a dashing figure as an 88-year-old great grandmother, running errands around town in her red Camaro, the one with the Washington Redskins banner on the radio antenna.

Town folks say she is a little eccentric, what with her passion for feeding animals, wearing skirts above the knee when fashionable and cheering on the Redskins.

But now, Davis is known for something else.

Authorities here in Southampton County say she is a murderer.

After a year-long investigation, leading to a county grand jury indict-

ment on March 16, she was charged last week with killing John Wimbrow, a 52-year-old unemployed man who had lived in her house for about 20 years, until he died on March 8, 1997.

An autopsy report indicated that Wimbrow had injuries to his chest and neck and died as the result of a blunt force injury.

With the Franklin police still investigating the incident, authorities have not said what evidence they have that would prove that Davis killed Wimbrow. Nor have they speculated on a possible motive.

Richard Grizzard, the commonwealth attorney for Southampton County, did not return a telephone message left for him, seeking comment.

Davis, the widow of an insurance executive, denied the charge and was released on \$20,000 bail.

Fatal crash of plane hunting coyotes probed

By Los Angeles Times

Federal agricultural officials are launching an investigation this week into the death of a government pilot, the fourth killed in a seventeen-month period while shooting coyotes from a low-flying plane as part of a little-known federal program.

LaWanna Clark, 51, of Mariposa, Calif., was killed March 11 when the plane she was piloting crashed during a pursuit of coyotes on a cattle ranch near the Grapevine in central California's Kern County.

A co-pilot instructor survived with a broken leg and multiple bruises.

The death followed a January crash in Utah that claimed the life of a 13-year veteran of the federal-state Wildlife Services Program who was hunting coyotes from a leased helicopter.

In October 1996, two animal control fliers died in another crash in Utah.

Fewer boys are being born in United States

By Washington Post

Mothers in the United States and other industrialized countries appear to be giving birth to proportionally fewer sons than they did decades ago, researchers reported Tuesday.

The ratio of baby boys to baby girls has been declining, albeit slightly, since the 1970s in the United States, Canada and several European countries, three re-

searchers report in Wednesday's issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

While the reason for the apparent change remains unknown, the report's authors suggest that one possibility is that human reproduction is being altered by exposure to chemical pollutants in the environment.

They note a recent rise in defects in the

sexual organs of boy babies, a phenomenon some scientists have linked to a class of man-made chemicals that interfere with human reproductive hormones.

Other scientists, however, dismissed the connection to pollution as highly speculative, and the authors themselves acknowledged that more research is needed before it's feasible to establish such a link.

Serbs may have used chemicals

By Newsday

WASHINGTON — Bosnian Serbs may have used chemical weapons against Muslims fleeing Srebrenica when the Serbs conquered the U.N. safe area in 1995, a leading human-rights group said Tuesday.

A spokeswoman for Human Rights Watch said in congressional testimony the organization drew its conclusion based on its own investigation, a U.S. intelligence assessment, the fact that the Pentagon had conducted two investigations, and repeated hints from U.S. government officials.

The Pentagon disputed the conclusion and challenged the group's credibility. "There is no evidence that any chemical weapons were used" by the Serbs against the Muslims, Col. Steve Campbell, a spokesman, told Newsday. He also said Human Rights Watch has "an agenda" and he could not understand why anyone would give them credibility.

Campbell said he was unaware of any investigation of the use of gas at Srebrenica. A White House spokesman had no immediate comment but said he was checking the facts.

Speaking before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Human Rights, Diane Paul said the Pentagon's first probe was in the summer of 1996 and was followed by a larger investigation. In late 1996, the U.S. intelligence community had information that chemical weapons "may have been used in Srebrenica," she said.

U.S. spy operations will stay full force in Bosnia

By Stars and Stripes

RAF MOLESWORTH, England — A smaller force presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina after June won't equate to a similar cut in the U.S. military intelligence's focus on the Balkan region, a military intelligence official says.

Air Force Col. Frances Early said the Joint Analysis Center will continue to bring in nearly 150 augmentees and Guard and Reserve members at a time to reinforce the center's staff as the Bosnia mission evolves into its third phase.

The center, a key U.S. European Command intelligence operation, also will continue to deploy staff members to the Balkans to contribute to intelligence efforts downrange.

"Whether you have 1,000 men and women on the ground or 6,900 or 20,000, the level of intelligence support that's required for those troops remain the same — particularly in terms of force protection," Early said in an interview.

"You could argue that the need for vigilance increases because there are fewer forces on the ground."

Established in 1992, the center is staffed by 644 permanent-party civilians, airmen, soldiers, sailors and Marines to conduct its intelligence mission 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Over the past year, Bosnia has experienced lengthy periods of relative calm, dotted with potentially dangerous peaks caused by such issues as voter registration and elections, the arrests of suspected war criminals, and upturns in activity by supporters of former Bosnian Serbian strongman Radovan Karadzic.

Early expects "the rhythm to remain much the same in the future." But, she warned, "In those valleys, there are just as many issues we're concerned about and need to research and be smart on."

So when it hits a peak, we can bring the resources to bear that we need to."

Charges against airman dropped

By Stars and Stripes

Turkish military police have dropped charges against four U.S. airmen whom they detained and searched in January over the objections of American officials at Incirlik Air Base.

The confrontation raised questions about Turkey's jurisdiction over Ameri-

can servicemembers. But lawyers for the U.S. Air Forces in Europe have determined that Turkey did not violate the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, said Col. Scott Graton, commander of the 39th Wing and 39th Air and Space Expeditionary Wing at Incirlik.

Even so, Graton said

Turkey's installation commander has verbally agreed to notify U.S. officials before detaining other U.S. servicemembers suspected of a crime and before searching U.S. military office buildings. U.S. servicemembers' base homes can be searched only on Graton's authority, the colonel said.

Officials are going after gangs in Germany

By Stars and Stripes

WÜRZBURG, Germany — Army officials in the Würzburg area are cracking down on four gangs that were uncovered during an eight-month investigation.

Thus far, investigators have not connected the gangs to any major crimes. But Col. Roger Jones, 98th Area Support Group commander, said he is determined to fight them before they can grow.

"It's our job to make these gangs go away and get them out of the community," Jones said.

To do so, Jones has adopted a strategy based on warnings and education. The plan was developed after investigators identified 40 high school students from Schweinfurt, Würzburg, Giebelstadt and Kitzingen as alleged gang members.

Command officials met with teachers

from Würzburg High School last Thursday and talked with the alleged gang members and their parents Monday at Leighton Theater in Würzburg. Maj. Gen. David L. Grange, the 1st Infantry Division commander, opened both sessions.

Next, Jones plans to launch education programs aimed at teachers, parents and students that will show them "what these gangs are all about."

Cameron goes after film critic

LOS ANGELES (AP) — He's won the Oscar, has the highest-grossing film in Hollywood history and stands to collect a \$100 million bonus.

And yet *Titanic* writer-director James Cameron isn't completely at peace: He has launched a counter-strike against one of the movie's most persistent critics, the lead Los Angeles Times film reviewer.

In a letter the Times published on the front page of Saturday's arts section, Cameron wrote that critic Kenneth Turan's open dislike of *Titanic* amounts to a condemnation of all of show business.

"It's not that he doesn't like some movies, as is a critic's prerogative," Cameron wrote.

"It's that he doesn't like all movies.

"Simmering in his own bile, year after year, he has become further and further removed from the simple, joyful experience of movie-watching, which, ironically, probably attracted him to the job in the first place."

Turan has criticized *Titanic* since its December opening.

The critic has been particularly critical of Cameron's script.

He called the screenplay "a hackneyed, completely derivative copy of old Hollywood romances."

He also said it is "a movie that reeks of phoniness and lacks even minimal originality."

TV's 'Xena' marries executive producer

By Associated Press

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Lucy Lawless, the leather-clad star of TV's *Xena: Warrior Princess*, has married the show's executive producer.

Lawless, 30, wed Rob Tapert, 43, on Saturday at a Santa Monica church, publicist Leah Krantzler said.

Lawless topped People magazine's list of Top 10 Trendsetters of 1998, released last month. She also played Rizzo in Broadway's *Grease* last fall while on a break from *Xena*.

It was Tapert's first marriage and Lawless' second. She has a 9-year-old daughter from her first marriage.

They were honeymooning Monday at an undisclosed location.

**Faces
'n'
places**

Di armor to be displayed

LONDON — The body armor worn by Princess Diana when she visited Angolan mine fields goes on display this week at the Imperial War Museum.

The protective vest will be among photographs and other memorabilia documenting Diana's campaign for a worldwide ban on antipersonnel mines. The princess visited Angola in January 1997.

The section on Diana is part of the exhibition's look at the history of land mines and the efforts being made to reduce their threat to civilians in former war zones. The Imperial War Museum and the United Nations organized the show, which runs through Aug. 2.

"This will be the first time the body armor she wore has gone on display," said Christopher Dowling, the head of museum services.

In The Stars and Stripes

10 YEARS AGO

April 1, 1988 — The "couch potato" isn't flourishing on U.S. soil. While about 70 percent of American adults say they watch some television during the evening, only 12 percent said it is their principal activity, according to a new survey.

20 YEARS AGO

April 1, 1978 — President Carter arrived in Nigeria, the petroleum-rich and politically influential West African nation, on the first state visit to a black African country ever made by an American president.

30 YEARS AGO

April 1, 1968 — Marine Corps Capt. Charles S. Robb bade farewell to his wife, Lynnda Bird, President Johnson's daughter, and left for Vietnam with 164 other Marines.

40 YEARS AGO

April 1, 1958 — The Soviet Union declared a ban on its own nuclear tests and called on the West to do the same. The United States said the Free World would not give up its ability to defend itself against aggression on the basis of such an elusive doctrine.

50 YEARS AGO

April 1, 1948 — Russia told the Allies it was assuming jurisdiction over all passenger and freight traffic between Berlin and West Germany.

'Grease' re-release comes close but doesn't rock 'Titanic'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The wave of nostalgia accompanying the re-release of *Grease* couldn't rock *Titanic*'s Oscar afterglow, box office receipts showed Monday.

Titanic stayed where it's been for 15 weeks, anchored at No. 1 in the turnstile sweepstakes with \$15.2 million in

receipts, nearly \$3 million ahead of second-place *Grease*, which made its 20th anniversary debut on Friday. They are both Paramount Pictures releases.

Starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John, *Grease* raised \$12.7 million to become the fourth-highest open-

ing ever for a re-release, behind the re-issues of the three *Star Wars* films.

Way behind in third place was the other Travolta movie *Primary Colors*, which earned \$7 million in its second week of release; *Titanic*'s Leonardo Di Caprio was in the No. 4 movie, *The Man in the Iron*

Mask, grossing \$6.3 million in its third week. Oscar-winning actors Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt gave their film *As Good As It Gets* a post-Academy Awards attendance bump.

It's \$4.3 million take was 35 percent higher than the previous week.

McGwire starts off with bang

By Associated Press

In St. Louis, Mark McGwire started the season with a bang, hitting a grand slam in the fifth inning off Ramon Martinez and leading the Cardinals over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

A sellout crowd of 47,972 on opening day screamed in anticipation when Delino DeShields walked on a full count to load the bases with McGwire on deck. McGwire didn't disappoint them, hitting a towering drive that cleared the left-field wall and broke open what was a scoreless game.

McGwire, who also doubled, overshadowed a strong performance from winner Todd Stottlemyre.

The St. Louis starter gave up three hits in seven-plus innings and didn't allow a runner past second base.

McGwire, expected to challenge Roger Maris' home-run record of 61 in this expansion year, is the first Cardinals player to hit a grand slam on opening day.

In Cincinnati, Pokey Reese tied a opening-day record for shortstops with four errors, helping the San Diego Padres and newcomer Kevin Brown roll to a 10-2 victory on Tuesday. Brown, one of a dozen players discarded by the Florida Marlins after their World Series title, gave up one run and five hits in 6 1-3 in-



AP

The Cards' Mark McGwire watches his grand slam sail out of the park.

nings and hit a three-run double in the seventh. Wally Joyner and Tony Gwynn added homers as baseball's first professional team took its most lopsided opening-day defeat since a 12-4 loss to Philadelphia in 1962. Reese put the Padres ahead to stay by committing four errors in the first three innings, tying the record for gaffes a shortstop in a season opener set by the Chicago Cubs' Lou Stringer in his major league debut on April 15, 1941. In other action, it was Mets 1, Phillies 0, 14 innings;; Padres 10, Reds 2; Braves 2, Brewers 1; Florida 11, Chicago 6; Giants 9, Houston 4; and Rockies 13, Arizona 6.

Franco rewards youngster's courage

NEW YORK (AP) — Mets reliever John Franco and Adam Dansinger made good on their agreement this winter to see each other again on opening day.

Franco and Dansinger first met in January when Dansinger was in the hospital recovering from a near-fatal car crash. At the time, the 19-year-old had recently emerged from a coma, and was beginning

a slow recovery after undergoing major brain surgery. Because he was a huge Mets fan, Adam's parents and doctors thought a chance to meet Franco would help their son's rehab, and through a family friend, arranged for Franco to visit the hospital. During their meeting, Franco urged Adam to get well and said that if he could make it to opening

day, he would be Franco's guest. And two hours before the Mets played the Philadelphia Phillies on Tuesday, Franco walked from the dugout to see Adam for the first time since they first met.

"Look at you, huh?" Franco said as he bent over to hug Adam, who was in a wheelchair but gets around slowly with a cane.

Mariners, Devil Rays pounded

By Associated Press

Tampa Bay's performance on opening day wasn't a surprise. Seattle's wasn't either.

The Devil Rays, the American League's new expansion team, gave up the game's first 11 runs and lost to Detroit 11-6 in their franchise opener Tuesday.

Seattle, still looking like an expansion team as far as the bullpen is concerned, wasted a six-run lead and allowed Cleveland to rally for a 10-9 victory.



"There was a lot going on, but we're not going to make excuses," Tampa Bay's Larry Rothschild said after his debut as a major league manager. "We just got beat."

Ken Griffey Jr., Jay Buhner, Edgar Martinez and Russ Davis each homered, a reminder the Mariners hit a record 264 home runs last year. But then came the bullpen, which blew 27 save chances last season.

Bobby Ayala, loser Tony Fossas and Mike Timlin combined to allow two hits and five walks in the eighth.

Randy Johnson, starting perhaps his final season with the Mariners, had a 9-3 lead, but wound up allowing six runs, 11 hits and two walks in 5 2-3 innings. "I usually lick my chops when I have a lead that big," Johnson said.

"When you've got that big of a lead, the offense has done its job." In Tuesday's other AL openers, Chicago beat Texas 9-2 and Kansas City defeated Baltimore 4-1. Other AL teams start tonight.

At Tropicana Field, which features baseball's first cigar bar, Joe Randa and Joe Oliver each drove in three runs and Luis Gonzalez hit a two-run homer before a sellout crowd of 45,369.

Jordan, Bulls stop Pistons in OT

By Associated Press

Michael Jordan's defense, Indiana's offense and San Antonio's Triple Towers provided all kinds of problems for opposing teams.

The Miami Heat had problems, too, even in victory Tuesday night. Alonzo Mourning fractured his left cheekbone and may be out for awhile.

At Chicago, Jordan's tough defense forced Grant Hill to take an off-balance 14-footer that missed at the end of regulation and allowed the Chicago Bulls to escape with a 106-101 overtime win.

"I still feel I can keep up my defense," Jordan said. "I'm not afraid of it." Said Hill: "It had a chance, it hit the rim."

At Indianapolis, the Pacers rebounded from their NBA-record low 55 points on Sunday by hitting a club record 14 3-pointers in a 128-106 rout of the Los Angeles Clippers. In the last three games Indiana scored 133, 55 and 128 points.

"It's impossible, don't even try and figure it out," Chris Mullin, who had 24 points and hit all six of his 3-point shots, said of the turnaround. At New York, the Spurs' 7-foot trio of David Robinson, Tim Duncan and Will Perdue had an easy time with the undersized Knicks in a 95-78 victory. The threesome combined for 57 points and 27 rebounds.

"We took advantage of our height the way we are supposed to," Spurs coach

Gregg Popovich said. "We controlled the boards and played good interior defense."

At Miami, Mourning and Andrew DeClercq collided chasing a loose ball in the third quarter, and the Heat's 6-10 center was scheduled for surgery today.

"He got the worse end of it," DeClercq, a second-year center from Florida, said. "I hope it heals quick and he gets back for the playoffs. In other games, it was Seattle 88, Utah 86; Miami 121, Boston 95; Los Angeles Lakers 114, Toronto 105; New Jersey 105, Atlanta 90; Cleveland 93, Orlando 86; Charlotte 101, Philadelphia 93; Phoenix 97, Houston 86; Milwaukee 94, Golden State 89; and Dallas 104, Vancouver 101.

Caps' Tikkanen almost wins bet with teammate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Esa Tikkanen almost won his friendly bet with teammate Craig Berube.

The gregarious Finn, whose lively personality and winning attitude have been a welcome addition for the Washington Capitals, appeared to score his first even-strength goal with his new team in the third period of Tuesday night's 5-2 victory over the New York Islanders.

"He was back at the bench yapping away," Washington coach Ron Wilson said, "because he thought he'd scored."

But the goal was waved off because the puck didn't completely cross the red line, leaving Tikkanen still in a jovial competition with Berube as to who will score the next goal.

"And the deal is they can't count power-play goals because Chief (Berube) doesn't get those opportunities," Wilson said.

Tikkanen scored with a man advantage earlier in the game. It was not only the game-winner, but it was only his second goal of the season and first to go along with seven assists since he was acquired from Florida three weeks ago.

In the only other NHL games, Philadelphia beat Chicago 3-2 and Montreal and Carolina tied 3-3.

Tikkanen is one of three March acquisitions who bring Cup experience to the Caps.

Diving in the outfield has new meaning in Phoenix

PHOENIX (AP) — Once upon a time, fans wore mitts at baseball games. As the Arizona Diamondbacks opened their new ballpark, some fans wore swimsuits.

But the swimmers who watched the game while cavorting in the pool and Jacuzzi beyond the right-center field fence couldn't afford to leave their baseball gloves at home.

The pool is just 415 feet from home plate, and Arizona's Travis Lee nearly splashed a homer in there in Tuesday night's opener against Colorado. His homer, the Diamondbacks' first run, landed about 50 feet away.

Lee's homer did set off water cannons alongside the pool, which is 4 1/2 feet at its deepest spot, requires two lifeguards and shoots a stream 35 feet into the air.

The sixth-inning blast also allowed a couple of disc jockeys to come up for air. The two DJs from a Phoenix radio station had vowed to stay underwater — in scuba gear — until the Diamondbacks scored their first run.

"It sort of mixes Jacques Cousteau and Jack McDowell," DJ Tim Hattrick said before heading into the pool. "We've got enough air for 15 innings. It just depends on how many pitching changes they make."

The pool, which holds 35 people and costs \$4,000 per game, was rented Tuesday by Fox Sports Arizona, a regional TV network. Despite a chilly evening, several swimmers stripped down to bathing suits.

The aquatic playground is just one of many features at the \$354 million Bank One Ballpark.

English soccer team crash-lands

LONDON (AP) — The Leeds United soccer team narrowly averted a disaster Tuesday when its chartered plane crash-landed after its right engine caught fire shortly after takeoff.

The two-engine British Aerospace 748 aircraft, which had only climbed

150 feet, overshot the runway as it touched down and the nose wheel collapsed as the craft came to a stop about 300 feet from the perimeter fence.

"It was frightening afterwards, but it seemed a little unreal sitting there with the engine burning, crash-landing and then

having to get out," said Leeds defender Norman Hunter, a former member of the English international team. The only member of the Leeds party to be injured was assistant manager and former Irish international player David O'Leary, who injured his shoulder.